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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/757,849	01/09/2001	James E. Wright	2003260-0001	8156

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EXAMINER

ALAM, SHAHID AL

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2172

DATE MAILED: 11/01/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/757,849

Applicant(s)

WRIGHT, JAMES E.

Examiner

Shahid Al Alam

Art Unit

2172

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 January 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 January 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. The references cited in the information disclosure statement (IDS 1449) submitted on August 12, 2002 have been considered by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 16 – 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kshitij Shah et al. of INFOHARNESS ("Shah").

With respect to claim 1, Shah teaches acquiring a search group of heterogeneously typed objects, wherein at least one of the objects comprises a link to another object;

determining for at least a portion of the object in the search group a set of targets of links from the objects, including determining whether the link targets are inside the search group; and

displaying a representation of at least one searched object, the representation having at least one display attribute determined by the set of link targets (page 18, lines 9 – 15, page 22, left column, line 21 – right column, line 9).

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With respect to claim 16, Shah teaches acquiring a first search group of objects; displaying a representation of at least a portion of the first search group of objects; and annotating one or more members of the first search group of objects, wherein annotations may be selectively displayed with the representation of the annotated objects (page 18, lines 9 – 15, page 21, right column, line 44 – page 22, right column, line 9).

As to claim 17, acquiring a second search group of objects; and displaying a representation of at least a portion of the second search group of objects, wherein displaying the representation of annotated objects that are members of both the first search group and the second search group includes selectively displaying annotations of the objects (page 18, lines 9 – 15, page 21, right column, line 44 – page 22, right column, line 9; Shah).

As to claim 18, the representations are displayed on a graph (page 22, right column, lines 3 – 23; Shah).

As to claim 19, the objects include links to other objects, and wherein at least a portion of the links are displayed as connectors between representations of the objects (page 22, left column, line 23 – right column, line 9; Shah).

As to claim 20, annotating one or more links (page 21, right column, line 44 – page 22, left column, line 3; Shah).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2 – 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shah as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,983,267 issued to Leon Shklar ("Shklar").

With respect to claim 2, Shah teaches acquiring a search group of heterogeneously typed objects, wherein at least one of the objects comprises a link to another object;

determining for at least a portion of the object in the search group a set of targets of links from the objects, including determining whether the link targets are inside the search group; and

displaying a representation of at least one searched object, the representation having at least one display attribute determined by the set of link targets (page 18, lines 9 – 15, page 22, left column, line 21 – right column, line 9).

Shah does not explicitly teach displayed representations are arranged into a plurality of display layers, and wherein the display layers can be independently hidden or displayed as claimed.

Shklar discloses displayed representations are arranged into a plurality of display layers, and wherein the display layers can be independently hidden or displayed as claimed (The individual item metadata units are then grouped, . . . , display the stored data news items in any desired format. The user has requested display of the data in a hierarchical format, . . . , see Figure 2, column 4, lines 1 – 5 and 57 – 61).

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Shklar with Shah, because combination would provide a system and method that analyzes and pre-indexes stored data, without altering the data, to accomplish real-time generation of an enhanced format presentation of the stored data for display (column 2, lines 5 – 8; Shklar).

As to claim 3, the display attribute is selected from the group consisting of color, shape, size, position, highlighting, graphical flags, and labeling text (page 23, left column, lines 3 – 10; Shah).

As to claim 4, representations of a plurality of objects are displayed on a graph (page 22, right column, lines 3 – 23; Shah).

As to claim 5, representations of a plurality of objects are displayed, and wherein at least one link between objects is depicted by a connector between the representations (page 22, left column, line 20 – right column, line 7; Shah).

As to claim 6, a display attribute of the connector is determined by a property selected from the group consisting of the type of the linking object, the type of the link target, and the type of the link (column 4, lines 1 – 14; Shklar).

As to claim 7, a display attribute of the representation is determined by object metadata (column 3, lines 40 – 45; Shklar).

As to claim 8, determining link targets includes recursively determining targets of links of an expanded set of objects comprising the original search group and the objects linked to by the search group (column 4, lines 8 – 25; Shklar).

As to claim 9, the recursion level is in the range of 1-10 (column 7, lines 43 – 49; Shklar).

With respect to claims 10, 11 and 12, Shah and Shklar teach the search objects substantially as claimed. Shah and Shklar teach metadata and Shklar teaches court case data in the abstract, in Figures 10 and 11 and in column 7, line 26 – column 8, line 40. Shah and Shklar do not explicitly teach legal data, scientific or medical article or patent data as claimed.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modifying data to be legal data, scientific or medical article or patent since differences in type of data do not distinguish the invention in term of petentability.

See In re Gulack , 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983) (when descriptive material is not functionally related to the substrate, the descriptive material will not distinguish the invention from the prior art in terms of patentability).

As to claim 13, annotating at least one of the search objects (page 21, right column, line 44 – right column, line 3; Shah).

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As to claim 14, at least a portion of the searched objects and link targets are classified into a plurality of groups, further comprising setting a display attribute for all members of a group (column 4, lines 1 – 5; Shklar).


As to claim 15, displayed representations are sorted on at least one axis according to a property of the objects represented (column 4, lines 1 – 5; Shklar).

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shahid Al Alam whose telephone number is (703) 305-2358. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kim Y. Vu can be reached on (703) 305-4393. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 746-7239 for regular communications and (703) 746-7238 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.


Shahid Al Alam
Examiner
Art Unit 2172

SAA
October 31, 2002